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PUBLIC HEALTH REPORTS.

VOL. XXV.

OCTOBER 14, 1910

No. 41.

CONFERENCES ON EPIDEMIC POLIOMYELITIS AT THE MEETING OF THE AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION, MILWAUKEE, WIS., SEPTEMBER 5-9, 1910.

By W. H. FROST, Passed Assistant Surgeon, United States Public Health and Marine-Hospital Service.

Although there was no discussion of epidemic poliomyelitis upon the programme of the association, a considerable number of members of the association were sufficiently interested in the subject to meet informally to discuss various aspects of this disease as a public health problem. Two such conferences were held, one on September 8 and one on September 9, attended by representatives from California, Connecticut, Iowa, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Virginia, Wisconsin, the District of Columbia, and the Province of Ontario. Poliomyelitis was reported to have been unusually prevalent in all of these districts and epidemic in most of them.

The questions most fully discussed at the conferences were:

1. The advisability of making anterior poliomyelitis a reportable disease. It was unanimously agreed that reports of this disease should be required by law. Of the States represented, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Minnesota, and Virginia have already made the disease reportable.

2. The advisability of quarantining cases. While there were some differences of opinion as to the rigidity of the quarantine which should be enforced, there was a general consensus of opinion to the effect that all cases should be isolated for at least two weeks from the date of onset; that the premises should be placarded; that children known to be in contact with cases of poliomyelitis should be excluded from schools for a period of two or three weeks. Regulations requiring complete family quarantine were considered by most of those present to be impracticable.

3. The disinfection of discharges from the patient. This was unanimously recommended.

Other points discussed were the relation of abortive cases and carriers to the spread of epidemics; the effect of climatic and seasonal conditions upon epidemics; the relation of paralysis of animals to human poliomyelitis; the possibility of transmission by insects; the infectiousness of fomites; the early diagnosis of the disease.

These conferences, as well as conversations with various state health officials actively engaged in the study of epidemic poliomyelitis, proved highly instructive, giving some idea of the extent of prevalence of epidemics of poliomyelitis during the past summer, of the great variations in epidemics as regards virulence and apparent contagiousness, and of the practical difficulties in the way of effectual prevention.